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PP RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHSF #0505/01 1131644
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 231644Z APR 07
FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3596
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 SOFIA 000505

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STATE EUR/NCE NORDBERG

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/20/2017

TAGS: [NATO](#) [PREL](#) [BU](#)

SUBJECT: PDAS VOLKER'S MEETING WITH THE "VILNIUS 10" NATO
ALLIES IN BULGARIA

Classified By: Ambassador John Beyrle for reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: In a V-10 meeting with EUR PDAS Kurt Volker, allies were in agreement on key issues, including NATO enlargement, the Kosovo Status process, missile defense, and energy security. All believed strongly about the need for further NATO enlargement and insisted that it be based on real performance. The V-10 allies endorsed the vision of moving the western Balkan region forward to greater stability and closer integration with Euro-Atlantic institutions, and agreed Kosovo's supervised independence was a necessary step towards this vision. The group concurred that Russia's concerns about missile defense were overblown and rooted in muscle-flexing; they agreed that NATO should speak with one voice. On energy security, allies believed it warrants closer attention and discussion in NATO. Volker praised Bulgaria and Romania's engagement with the Black Sea littoral states, called for practical efforts to reduce carbon emissions and challenged Europe to support democracy in Cuba. In a joint meeting between the V-10 and the western Balkans, Serbia's representative questioned whether Ahtisaari had exhausted all possible options for a settlement. Volker underscored that NATO wants to welcome Serbia to the fold and see the country succeed, while emphasizing that the Ahtisaari plan will be the basis for any settlement to Kosovo. END SUMMARY

¶2. (U) EUR PDAS Kurt Volker met April 11-12 in Sofia with V-10 Political Directors (or heads of NATO-Security Departments) to discuss regional issues. Balkans Office Director Christopher Hoh also joined the meetings to discuss U.S. views on the western Balkans. Representatives of the western Balkan countries and UNMIK met separately to discuss Euro-Atlantic integration and Kosovo, and later joined the V-10 in a joint April 12 session.

NATO ENLARGEMENT

¶3. (C) V-10 allies voiced strong support for further NATO enlargement and pushed for keeping open the possibility that all three MAP countries (Albania, Croatia and Macedonia) could be offered membership at the 2008 Summit. Many praised the Riga Summit and the decision to offer PFP to Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro. Hungary's Political Director, Ivan Udvardi, called the PFP offer to Serbia "the right thing to do." At the same time, participants agreed membership should depend on the performance of candidates and that aspirants need to demonstrate progress. As the Estonian Political Director Aivo Orav summarized it, "we want to be part of a 'strong' NATO." The group agreed to convey the message to the Balkan states that NATO will do its part, but

they must do theirs. Many representatives recognized Croatia as far advanced in the membership process and argued that Zagreb should not be held behind because of the other MAP countries' shortcomings.

14. (C) All the allies praised Georgia for its progress and recent restraint in ignoring Russian provocations. Many participants emphasized that Georgia needs further encouragement and regard MAP for Tbilisi as a goal to achieve before 2008 if possible, but no later than the Bucharest Summit. The allies agreed Ukraine had taken a step backwards and is internally divided over NATO membership. Poland's Deputy Director for Security Policy, Tomasz Lekarski, argued for trying to influence the political process in Ukraine by speaking out on the positive effects of membership. Participants were adamant about not allowing Russia to influence the Alliance's decisions on membership. The Czech Security Policy Director said, "we would not be around this table," if NATO had taken Russia's arguments about enlargement into consideration. Lekarski stressed that every country has the right to decide on its own security.

KOSOVO STATUS

15. (C) All the V-10 representatives, including Slovakia, agreed that Kosovo's supervised independence was a necessary step for moving the region forward. Slovakia's Political Director, Miroslav Lajcak, said "we cannot ignore our parliament," but we will be with Europe on this and will "behave as members of EU and NATO." (The participants delivered this united message to the Balkan nations--including Serbia--when they held their joint session). Many allies, such as Romania, Hungary and

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Bulgaria, emphasized that a UNSCR is indispensable. Hungary's Udvardi emphasized that a UNSC resolution was necessary for a sustainable solution since there was no chance of a velvet divorce as with the Czechs and Slovaks. The Bulgarian Political Director, Valentin Poriazov, noted that such legitimacy is important because the precedent issue is a concern in the Balkans. PDAS Volker said we will work hard to obtain a UNSC resolution and believe we will succeed; but he also called to mind Darfur as an example where the international community has failed to prevent violence given its unwavering focus on UNSC legitimacy. We should not allow the absence of a UNSCR to cause us to fail to prevent violence in the Balkans.

16. (C) There was unanimity about the need for Russia to be part of the UNSC agreement. Participants such as Hungary, Slovakia and Bulgaria believe Russia is pursuing its own interests rather than being genuinely concerned about Kosovo or the region. Slovakia and Hungary's representatives argued that Russia needs a face-saving measure to cooperate. "They don't want to veto, but will if they are backed into a corner," stated Slovakia's Lacjak. Volker stressed U.S. commitment to engaging Russia, and noted Secretaries Rice and Gates both will visit Moscow in the coming weeks. The V-10 allies broadly agreed that the "price" for Moscow's cooperation must be within the Ahtisaari plan and should not include such things as Georgia's NATO membership or energy. The group also agreed that better cooperation between NATO and the EU was essential for the settlement to succeed. The V-10 group was later joined by representatives from the western Balkan countries and UNMIK. UNMIK's Steven Shook underscored the necessity for moving forward on Ahtisaari's proposal, while Serbia's Deputy Director for NATO, Bratislav Djordjevic, reiterated Belgrade's opposition to the plan and warned about the negative internal consequences it could bring to Serbia. PDAS Volker thanked Djordjevic for Serbia's participation in the meeting and stressed that the success of the EU is rooted in overcoming history, whether France and Germany, or Hungary and its minorities abroad. As painful as

it is, Volker said, success in the Balkans requires those nations to overcome history and take care of their people today.

MISSILE DEFENSE

¶7. (C) The allies agreed Russia's concerns about missile defense were exaggerated and appear to reflect Moscow's muscle-flexing. The Czech Republic's Kuchynova-Smigolova expressed disappointment with "how quickly" allies in Western Europe accepted Russia's rhetoric on missile defense. All the participants saw a strong need to better coordinate their positions before talking to Russia and for the Alliance to speak in one voice on the issue. The group urged continuing U.S. public diplomacy efforts to enlighten an ill-informed European public and "take away the argument" from Russia. They welcomed the news that the Secretary as well as Defense Secretary Gates will visit Moscow soon. PDAS Volker pressed

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European leaders to speak up as well.

NATO-RUSSIA COUNCIL

¶8. (C) The V-10 group shared their disappointment that the NATO-RUSSIA Council (NRC) has failed to produce constructive dialogue. Despite seeing the NRC as "broken" and an "empty shell," allies still regard it as a useful forum for discussions with Russia and agree NATO needs to continue pursuing practical cooperation with Moscow. V-10 representatives agreed that other issues such as "frozen conflicts" and energy security should be discussed in the NRC.

ENERGY SECURITY

¶9. (C) Participants agreed energy security is a critical issue and that Russia is using energy as a political tool. The V-10 allies share the view that energy is an appropriate topic for NATO and should be treated as a security issue. Representatives noted that the EU is divided over the issue and that countries are pursuing separate goals. Bulgaria's Poriakov remarked that other EU members' interests are not taken into account when certain members make decisions with Russia. Kuchynova-Smigolova criticized the EU as "acting in a vacuum" in its efforts to address the issue through

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internal restructuring, saying these reforms will not help if Russia remains in a monopolist position outside the EU. The group agreed the diversification of energy sources was crucial and recognized Russia's efforts to buy shares in Europe's energy infrastructure as a dangerous trend.

AFGHANISTAN

¶10. (C) PDAS Volker previewed upcoming discussions in Oslo by summarizing the priorities that emerged from NATO SECGEN Hoop Scheffer's recent talks with Secretaries Rice and Gates and NSA Hadley. These include the need to increase European "ownership" of a successful outcome in Afghanistan and calls for greater international coordination, force generation and consistent messaging. Many allies confirmed their willingness to increase their commitments to Afghanistan. Kuchynova-Smigolova announced that the Czechs are seeking to take over a PRT. Lithuania's Director for Security Policy, Algis Dabkus, said Lithuania had made a decision to send an additional special operations force to Afghanistan. The Deputy Political Director for Latvia, Nils Janson, noted that

Riga is currently working on a plan for Afghanistan that would increase both their military and civilian contingents. Hungary's Udvardi stressed that Budapest considers theirs a "long-term commitment."

CUBA

¶11. (C) PDAS Volker urged V-10 representatives to work toward an EU policy calling for democratic transition in Cuba. He noted that Spanish Foreign Minister Moratinos conferred legitimacy on Raoul Castro while failing to meet dissidents. Poriazov mentioned that EU's divisions on Cuba extend beyond the GAERC and were present in the European Parliament as well. The Czech representative expressed strong support for the U.S. position but speculated that democracy may not happen as quickly as we hope.

CLIMATE CHANGE

¶12. (C) PDAS Volker stated that the past seven years of international climate policy had been a disaster because Kyoto bitterly divided the international community. Those who opposed it were vilified, even if they cut emissions, while those who supported it were hailed, even if they did not reduce emissions. Volker encouraged V-10 representatives to urge the EU to avoid repeating the mistake of pushing another global cap-and-trade treaty and to instead support an approach that welcomes all efforts, by all countries, to reduce emissions.

BLACK SEA

¶13. (C) The allies discussed the Black Sea and efforts, largely by Romania and Bulgaria, to bring the region to the forefront of European and Euro-Atlantic agendas. Bulgaria's NATO Director Petyo Petev said Bulgaria does not want a closed discussion among littoral states on the Black Sea and believes NATO should focus more on the region. Romania's Political Director, Ovidiu Dranga, remarked that EU membership has opened the door to more opportunities in the Black Sea on a number of fronts, such as the environment, economic development and counter-proliferation. PDAS Volker and others commended Bulgaria and Romania for showing leadership on the issue, and said Russia should be encouraged to see that it will benefit from enhanced Black Sea Cooperation.

EUR PDAS Volker has approved this cable.
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